

**From:** Wes Rand  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 11/25/01 9:03pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft settlement

Dear US Justice Department,

I do not believe the remedies as reported will have the slightest effect on Microsoft's predatory marketing practices and illegal abuse of monopoly power.

And developments since the verdict in the case are disturbing. Especially with regard to the internet: Microsoft has bundled their browser for free with their operating system and drove all other browser manufacturers out of the market. They claim they have a right to do this, and that they are only serving consumer needs.

But their most recent versions -- including ALL browsers shipped with the new Windows XP -- have made a significant change: they no longer support industry-standard third-party browser plug-ins for presenting specialized content, such as movies, sound, animation, and virtual reality.

This means that third-party content providers, such as Real Audio, Macromedia Flash, Adobe PDF, and Apple QuickTime -- just to name a few of the larger players -- no longer function under Microsoft's browsers using the standard installation procedure. Instead, they must provide special installations that go through an additional layer of software -- Active X -- that Microsoft's own content provisioning software does not go through.

This means that ordinary consumers will have to struggle needlessly to install third-party content provisioning software, but perhaps more importantly, if they do actually get through that struggle, the third-party plug-ins will run more slowly and with less capability than will Microsoft's own content provisioning software.

This also means that some 90% of new computers sold cannot properly access many web sites which use non-Microsoft software such as Apple QuickTime content, whereas 90% of pre-Windows XP computers could.

With this current settlement, really just a cushy "hand slap" settlement, Microsoft not only successfully extended their operating system monopoly into the internet browser market, but now they have extended their monopoly into the content provider marketplace! They have broken the law once, and while being penalized, have broken it again. And they are moving to extend it with their .NET initiative using their operating system monopoly and their new browser monopoly.

Soon consumers will be unable to access content that Microsoft has not provided or approved of. This is hardly protecting or maintaining free market capitalism

and undermines a key industry. Please revisit this settlement and work for real punishments. Thank you for your attention.

Wes Rand

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The great thing about democracy is that it gives every voter a chance to do something stupid.  
- Art Spander

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